

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (Cancelled).

21. (New) A method of operating a strip casting machine for producing a metal strip, comprising:
 - continuously pouring molten metal between two casting rolls forming a casting gap;
 - adjusting sealing plates against facing surfaces of the two casting rolls for limiting a side of the casting gap;
 - setting the sealing plates into an oscillating movement transverse to a direction of a rotational axis of the casting rolls during a casting operation;
 - moving the sealing plates in an oscillating manner in and opposite to a direction of a periphery of the casting rolls, whereby said moving occurs alternately along one or the other of casting roll edges.
22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein a frequency of the oscillating movement of the sealing plate is variable.
23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the oscillating frequency is based on a casting speed.
24. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said moving of the sealing plates in the direction of the periphery of a respective one of the casting rolls is faster, equal to, or slower than a movement of a rotating surface of the casting rolls.
25. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein said moving of the sealing plates against the direction of the periphery of a respective one of the casting rolls is faster, equal to, or slower than the movement of the sealing plates in the direction of the periphery.

26. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein a lift of the sealing plates is +/- 0.5 mm to +/- 10.0 mm.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein, when the sealing plates are moved in a direction of movement of a casting strip, the lift of the sealing plates occurs at a speed as much as 10% faster than the speed of the casting strip.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein, when the sealing plates are moved in a direction opposite a direction of movement of a casting strip, the lift of the sealing plates occurs at a speed as much as 10 times slower than a speed of the sealing plates in a direction of movement of the casting strip.

29. (New) A device for performing a strip casting method, comprising:

two casting rolls arranged to form a casting gap;

side seals each having a sealing plate adjustable against facing surfaces of said casting rolls for limiting a side of the casting gap;

a drive unit for generating oscillating movements of said side seals by:

setting the sealing plates into an oscillating movement transverse to a direction of a rotational axis of said casting rolls during a casting operation; and

moving said sealing plates in an oscillating manner in and opposite to a direction of a periphery of said casting rolls, whereby said sealing plates are moved alternately along one or the other of casting roll edges;

base plates each fixed adjacent to a respective one of said side seals;

a plurality of guide elements disposed on said side seals and said base plates, said guide elements having a first section for steering each of said side seals along a first casting roll edge, and a second section for steering each of said side seals along a second casting roll edge; and

an adjustment mechanism for alternately adjusting a position of said side seals via said first section or said second section of said guide elements.

30. (New) The device of claim 29, wherein said guide elements disposed on said side seals comprise circular guides, at least one of said circular guides being located in a lower area at the casting gap, and two of said circular guides being located in an upper, expanded area of said side seals such that guide surfaces of said circular guides facing outside edges of said side seals each lie on a circumference of a circle with a radius of each of said casting roll and a center corresponding to an axis of rotation of a respective one of said casting rolls.

31. (New) The device of claim 30, wherein said guide elements disposed on said base plate are formed as guide rolls to be brought into contact with said guide surfaces.

32. (New) The device of claim 31, wherein each of said guide rolls is bearingly and rotatably positioned on a bolt connected with pistons adjustably located within a fixed guide cylinder forming said adjustment mechanism, said pistons are adjustable vertically in relation to a relevant guide surface.

33. (New) The device of claim 32, wherein each guide cylinder for said guide rolls is arranged in the casting gap area to be adjusted against lower guide surfaces, and is affixed by a holder to a lower position cylinder firmly connected with a respective one of said base plates.

34. (New) The device of claim 33, wherein said drive unit comprises a lower piston/cylinder unit held between an upper base plate-affixed holder and a holder affixed to a respective one of said side seals, said lower piston/cylinder unit extending almost vertically between two upper position cylinders, said holder affixed to said lower position cylinder is positioned above a lower position cylinder.

35. (New) The device of claim 32, wherein each guide cylinders for said guide rolls is adjustable against guide surfaces of an upper circular guide are affixed symmetrically to a vertical central

plane of a respective one of said base plates and are firmly affixed to said respective one of said base plates.

36. (New) The device of claim 30, wherein said lower circular guide comprises two guide surfaces directed towards outside edges of said side seals, and has a rounded cross-section to be brought into contact with correspondingly shaped circumferential surfaces of a respective guide roll.

37. (New) The device of claim 30, wherein said upper circular guides each comprise a guide surface directed against an outside edge of a respective one of said side seals, and each has a rounded cross-section to be brought into contact with a correspondingly-shaped circumferential surface of a respective guide roll.

38. (New) The device of claim 29, wherein said guide elements disposed on said side seals are shaped as guide surfaces arranged at an outside circumference of a moveable plate connected with a sealing plate holding frame, said guide surfaces lying on a circumference of a circle having a radius equal to a radius of one of said casting rolls and having a center coincident with an axis of rotation of a respective one of said casting rolls.

39. (New) The device of claim 38, wherein said guide elements disposed on said base plates are shaped as two guide roll pairs arranged symmetrically with respect to a vertical central plane of each of said base plates, a first guide roll pair being located in a lower area of a respective one of said side seals, and a second guide roll pair being located in an upper expanded area of said respective one of said side seals, said guide surfaces of said moveable plate being in constant contact with said lower guide rolls and can be alternately pressed against one or the other upper guide roll.

40. (New) The device of claim 39, wherein said moveable plate with said guide surfaces further has a recess in an upper area thereof, said recess being symmetrical to a vertical central plane of said moveable plate, two eccenters connected with a drive project into said recess, said drive being operable to drive in a counter direction such that said eccenters and an inside surface of said recess are shaped to suit each other such that said moveable plate can be pressed alternately against one of said upper guide rolls with one of said guide surfaces during rotation of said eccentric.